

Issa Releases Report Exposing Climate of Complacency at the National Archives

WASHINGTON. D.C. – House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA) [released a report today](#) entitled, “An Agency on the Brink: How the Theft of Sensitive Property Exposed a Climate of Complacency at the National Archives.” The report details new information stemming from a criminal investigation launched by the Office of Inspector General, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Secret Service in March of 2009 after a hard drive containing Clinton-era personally-identifying and national security information was missing from a National Archives facility in College Park, Maryland. The report also raises specific concerns regarding the National Archives and Records Administration’s (NARA) lack of recognition of sensitive material, has an unsecure workspace environment, lack of internal controls and low morale.

On the Criminal Investigation [Page 5]:

“In September 2009, [NAME REDACTED] submitted to a polygraph test. The test was administered by the U.S. Department of Defense OIG. [NAME REDACTED] answered “No” to each of the following questions: “Did you steal that disk? Did you steal that disk from that work area? Do you know where the disk is now?” The polygraph showed [NAME REDACTED] was being **deceptive** when answering each of those questions.

“In a subsequent interview, [NAME REDACTED] continued to deny criminal involvement in the loss of the hard drive. A consent search was conducted on the personal computer equipment at her residence. The forensic examination revealed that the missing hard drive had not been connected to any of the four computers she presented to OIG investigators. While OIG investigators were at [NAME REDACTED]’s home, **her son removed a laptop computer** from the residence. The son refused to consent to allow OIG investigators to forensically image his computer.

“Additionally, during interviews with the USSS, [NAME REDACTED] initially failed to disclose that **she visited Cuba** in 2006 in response to questions about international travel. She was unable to recall if she reported travel to Cuba on her recently-completed background clearance form (form SF-86).”

On the NARA’s Lack of Security [Page 6]

“On May 19, 2009, NARA Inspector General (IG) Paul Brachfeld notified Committee staff that an investigation of the missing hard drive was underway...Mr. Brachfeld described the loss of Back-Up #2 as ‘the greatest loss ever and troubling and amazing.’

“During the May 19, 2009 briefing, Mr. Brachfeld described a potentially catastrophic lack of internal controls at NARA. According to the IG, even NARA’s secure storage spaces for sensitive information are susceptible to breach.”

On Former Acting Archivist and Current Deputy Archivist Adrienne Thomas Page 7]:

“Given the alarming nature of the concerns raised during Mr. Brachfeld’s briefing, Acting Archivist Adrienne Thomas was invited to testify at the hearing. Subcommittee Ranking Member Patrick McHenry intended to ask Ms. Thomas important questions about the loss of the hard drive, including what measures were taken in the immediate wake of the loss to determine exactly what was missing and to prevent further losses.

“Ms. Thomas **declined** to appear as a witness. She informed Committee staff that she would

be in St. Louis on May 21, 2009 for the dedication of a new NARA facility. On the morning of May 21, **Ms. Thomas was observed** attending a speech by President Obama at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., less than one mile from the Committee's hearing room.

“On May 19, 2009, Mr. Brachfeld further described to Committee staff how then-Acting Archivist Adrienne Thomas **wrote off the loss of \$6 million** worth of computer equipment (driver, laptops, etc.).”

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